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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2903
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3120
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 001347

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA
PM FOR A/S KIMMITT AND HADRICK
ALSO FOR IO ACTING A/S HOOK, PDAS WARLICK
P FOR DRUSSELL AND RRANGASWAMY
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/SCHEDLBAUER
NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/YERGER/MCDERMOTT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [UNSC](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [IS](#) [SY](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: ARMY COMMANDERS LAMENT DEMINING PROBLEMS

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) In a September 10 meeting, Brigadier General (BG) Mohammed Fehmi, Commander of the Lebanese Mine Action Center (LMAC), stated that lack of further funding for demining activities in southern Lebanon was a grave concern and expressed sincere hope that the U.S. would "push LMAC's needs" for both more funding and to pressure the Israelis for release of accurate strike data. Presiding over an orientation for PolOff, the General relayed the enormity of the situation and the surface areas assigned to LMAC. Addressing the issue of cleared surface areas, DynCorp Project Manager Mark Craig stated that no areas cleared by LMAC have been certified by appropriate auditors according to International Mine Surface Standards. End Summary

2. (SBU) On September 10, PolOff met BG Mohammed Fehmi, Commanding General of LMAC, Intelligence Officer (G-2) Col. Emile Al-Dahar, Operations Officer LTC Rizk, and Logistical Officer LTC Mohammed Sheikh for an update on LMAC demining activities in Lebanon. DynCorp Project Manager for Conventional Weapons Destruction Mark Craig also attended the briefing. A follow-on meeting was held at the LMAC Engineer Battalion HQ presided over by Col. Abou Jaoudi and his staff.

LMAC COMMANDERS LAMENT
LACK OF FUNDING, STRIKE DATA

3. (SBU) BG Fehmi emphasized the tremendous amount of cleared surface area to date and the critical need for continued funding to finish the job and restore sizable areas of southern Lebanon to productive use. He was aware of the ongoing efforts to obtain additional contributions from donor nations, noting that the United Arab Emirates was a major international donor, along with the U.S., European Union and the United Nations. PolOff conveyed U.S. concern about the funding problems, adding that the U.S. was exploring remedies. BG Fehmi stated that LMAC had been very successful in clearing the nearly 48 million square meters (sqm) of cluster bombs, representing 79 percent of the known contaminated area, with 146,500 cluster bombs destroyed, and 150 million sqm with mines and unexploded ordinance (UXO), representing 61 percent cleared.

14. (C) The commander was notably annoyed at the lack of accurate strike data from the Israelis, which he said was important to focus on the exact contaminated areas. Asked how the demining teams discovered contaminated areas, Rizk stated that much information had come initially from civilian notifications when the cluster bombs were dropped, and later by noting the immediate area surrounding the location of fatalities due to ordnance explosions. BG Fehmi stated that there had been 323 casualties and 42 deaths due to cluster bombs since August 2006.

LACK OF CERTIFICATION PROCESSES

15. (SBU) At the conclusion of the LMAC presentation PolOff met separately with DynCorp Project Manager Mark Craig. He spoke privately of his concern that LMAC had taken no steps to begin a clearance certification process through a third party auditor. He noted the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS), part of the ISO 9000-2000, as the proper certification standard. Craig added that the United Nations Mine Action Center (UNMAC) has audits prepared by NGO and private company auditors. Craig attributed lack of certification to LMAC's Engineer Battalion Commander Col. Abou Joudi's refusal to allow auditors in his area. Craig added that BG Fehmi had made stern corrective comments to Joudi over the matter. Moreover, Craig added, any further funding needed to take into account the IMAS certification costs, and that further funding could become contingent on proper certification processes.

BEIRUT 00001347 002 OF 002

DEMINEING BATTALION NEEDS EQUIPMENT

16. (SBU) In Poloff's follow-on meeting with Engineer Battalion Commander Col. Joudi, he expressed repeatedly that his battalion needed more equipment, especially "tracked mine rollers." DynCorp's Craig added the battalion would soon receive more hand held mine sweepers and that three slots were being presented for demining training in Australia. Additionally, the underwater explosive ordnance team had just completed a two-day training session for several members. They expressed the need for more underwater mining to clear areas designated for tourism and shipping business. The officers at the meeting commented that morale was high in the battalion and they wanted to continue with the important work, hoping that funding and equipment shortages could be resolved.

17. (SBU) Action Request: Request PM/WRA update on status of proposed funding for Mine Action Group (MAG).

SISON